

Procedure for the reimbursement of OLC Member expenses

1. Members claiming expenses must complete and sign a Legal Services Board expenses claim form and each expense must be supported by appropriate receipts, travel documents or vouchers. Please note that credit card slips are not accepted as receipts.
2. HM Revenue and Customs ('HMRC') requires receipts to be submitted in respect of all claims for expenses (including travel). This explicitly includes receipts for travel on public transport where available, including claims for journeys on a pay as you go London Transport oyster card. HMRC has granted a concession for parking paid by telephone, but only if it is impossible to obtain a receipt.
3. Wherever possible travel documents submitted in support of a claim (i.e. the receipt and/or tickets) must evidence the date of travel, the departure point and destination and the cost of travel. Particular care should be taken with rail/tube tickets as in some circumstances these may be automatically retained by exit barriers. To mitigate against loss of ticket(s) under these circumstances, it is recommended that a separate receipt is obtained at the point of purchase, preferably evidencing the required information.
4. The claim form must also state the reason for the expense (e.g. Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting) and all claims submitted must be in accordance with the Member's "Terms of Appointment" and subject to any published information/directives in respect of expenses claims; for example, Legal Services Board "Policy on Reimbursement of Expenses.
5. The Legal Services Board Policy on Reimbursement of Expenses provides information in respect of members claiming travel expenses. In respect of rail journeys members should always travel standard class, with the exception of colleagues with a disability, who may travel first class if this is necessary as a reasonable adjustment to support them in carrying out their duties.
6. Where possible members should avoid paying full rail fares, for example by booking tickets in advance where meetings are scheduled in good time.
7. The completed claim form and supporting documentation must be signed and forwarded to the OLC Board Secretary as soon as possible to ensure that all expense claims are processed in a timely fashion and that accurate information is published on the Legal Ombudsman website. The LSB generally will not pay expenses later than three months after the expense was incurred.

8. On receipt, the Board Secretary will check the claim form and verify the associated receipts and the OLC Chair will countersign and date the expenses claim form to confirm approval. Expenses claims submitted by the Chair will be countersigned and approved by the OLC Head of Finance.
9. If for any reason the expenses claim cannot be approved, the claim form and documentation will be returned to the claimant by the Board Secretary along with an explanation. This will include any proposed remedy/recommendation needed before re-submission.
10. The Finance Team will record the details of each claim received on an internal database. This will be used for the purposes of internal record keeping and to facilitate the publication of Members' expenses on the Legal Ombudsman website. A copy of all expenses documentation will also be retained by the Finance Team in accordance with statutory and legislative requirements.
11. The original claim form and documentation will be forwarded to the Legal Ombudsman Finance Team for payment to be made to the claimant as soon as possible. This will be by direct payment into the bank account nominated by the Member. Members are responsible for advising the Finance Team of any changes to their banking arrangements in good time.
12. Each financial quarter, the Finance Team will submit a quarterly and cumulative report for the current financial year summarising claimed expenses to an OLC Board Meeting. Details of the approved expenses will then be published on the Legal Ombudsman website in accordance with the OLC / Legal Ombudsman Freedom of Information publication scheme.
13. Queries relating to Members' expense claims should be directed to the Board Secretary in the first instance.
14. The Finance Team will arrange for the Legal Ombudsman to receive full reimbursement for all Members' expenses from the Legal Services Board on a regular basis. This may require either original or copy expenses documentation to be issued to the LSB. The Finance Team will ensure as far as possible, that full reimbursement has been received from the LSB by the end of each financial year.